



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

Eastern Agency Council Report

December 4, 2021



WELCOME MESSAGE

As we continue to persevere through the COVID-19 pandemic this holiday season, we continue to offer our prayers for all of our Diné people to remain strong, hopeful, and resilient. While the COVID-19 pandemic reminds us of our shared challenges, it also demonstrates how kinship, resiliency, and compassion connects each of us during difficult times. As Diné, we have stood against many adversities and overcome many challenges and we continue to move forward just as our ancestors and elders did long ago.

As we observed Thanksgiving and Native American Heritage Month, we encourage families to celebrate safely at home with only their immediate household members. Prior to the pandemic, we would gather together with relatives, friends, and community members to share meals and stories, but this year we have to take precautions to protect our elders and family members. As you celebrate, we ask you to please wear masks, practice social distancing, get fully vaccinated, and be very careful to help reduce the risks associated with COVID-19.

We may miss our relatives and friends, but we must stay vigilant and safe. This holiday season may be challenging, but may it also serve as a reminder of the blessings of our families and well-being. We must remain positive and encourage each other to make tomorrow better than today and to make the future better for our children.

During this time, consider and reflect on how our ancestors led the way forward through the practices of T'áá hwó' ajít'éego, or self-reliance, K'é, kinship, Tsodizin, prayer, and other principles during hard times. Our Navajo values and principles make us people of hope, faith, strength, and compassion. Therefore, we must stand united to combat the modern-day monsters that plague our communities. With positive thoughts and actions, let us be the people our ancestors and elders need us to be in the time of hardship. They have blessed us with discipline, prayers, and teachings to move forward, and we have all the tools needed to ensure a better future for future generations.

We can do this as we stand united because our ancestors have done it before. They have worked hard, sacrificed, and invested in what they believed would make a difference for us. That is who we are as sacred people. We are embedded with discipline, resilience, strength, compassion, and faith. In these moments, we use these sacred teachings to move forward towards a brighter and healthier future.

With this message, we wish every family a Happy Holiday season full of joy and gratitude. Ahee'hee'


JONATHAN NEZ
NAVAJO NATION PRESIDENT


MYRON LIZER
NAVAJO NATION VICE PRESIDENT

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88 NEW CASES, 37,647 RECOVERIES, AND NO RECENT DEATHS RELATED TO COVID-19

On Friday, the Navajo Department of Health, in coordination with the Navajo Epidemiology Center and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service, reported 88 new COVID-19 cases for the Navajo Nation and no recent deaths. The total number of deaths remains 1,547. The report indicates that 37,647 individuals have recovered from COVID-19. 397,846 COVID-19 tests have been administered. The overall total number of positive COVID-19 cases is now 39,898, including 42 delayed reported cases.

Navajo Nation COVID-19 positive cases by Service Unit:

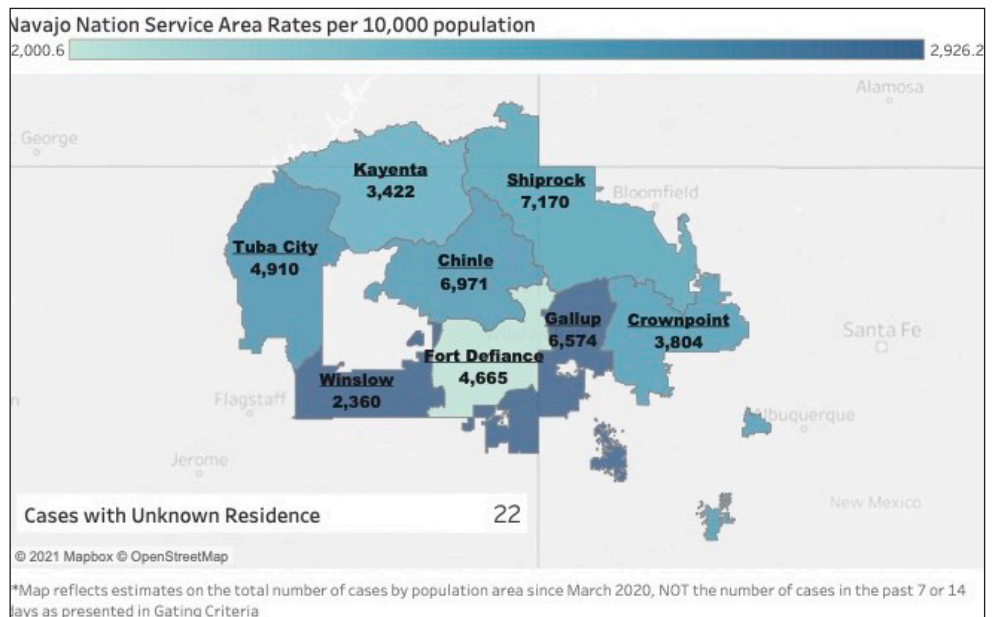
- Chinle Service Unit: 6,971
- Crownpoint Service Unit: 3,804
- Ft. Defiance Service Unit: 4,665
- Gallup Service Unit: 6,574
- Kayenta Service Unit: 3,422
- Shiprock Service Unit: 7,170
- Tuba City Service Unit: 4,910
- Winslow Service Unit: 2,360

* 22 residences with COVID-19 positive cases are not specific enough to place them accurately in a Service Unit.

On Friday, the state of Arizona reported 5,236 new cases, Utah reported 1,873 cases, and New Mexico reported 2,388 new cases. On Friday, the Office of the President and Vice President was informed that 98-percent of Navajo Area Indian Health Service employees are fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Additionally, 97-percent of Navajo Nation Executive Branch employees are fully vaccinated as well.

“As of Friday, the Omicron variant has been detected in at least five states that include New York, California, Hawaii, Minnesota, and Colorado. We continue to put forth our mitigation efforts through the Navajo Department of Health and our public health partners, but we have to anticipate that this new variant will reach our communities at some point. Public health officials within the Navajo Nation continue to sequence swab samples and their priority is to help detect the Omicron variant if it is within our communities. We will immediately inform the public if this new variant is detected on the Navajo Nation. In the meantime, we ask all of our Navajo people to remain vigilant and continue to take precautions and limit travel. The safest place to be is at home here on the Navajo Nation,” said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez.

Health care facilities across the Navajo Nation continue to



administer COVID-19 vaccines. If you would like to receive one of the COVID-19 vaccines, please contact your health care provider and schedule an appointment.

“We know what needs to be done to protect ourselves and others. It’s up to us to practice the safety protocols that our health experts put forth to help slow and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Please stay safe, keep praying for yourselves and your loved ones, and continue to take precautions especially if you have to travel,” said Vice President Myron Lizer.

For more information, including helpful prevention tips, and resources to help stop the spread of COVID-19, visit the Navajo Department of Health’s COVID-19 website: <http://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>. For COVID-19 related questions and information, call (928) 871-7014.



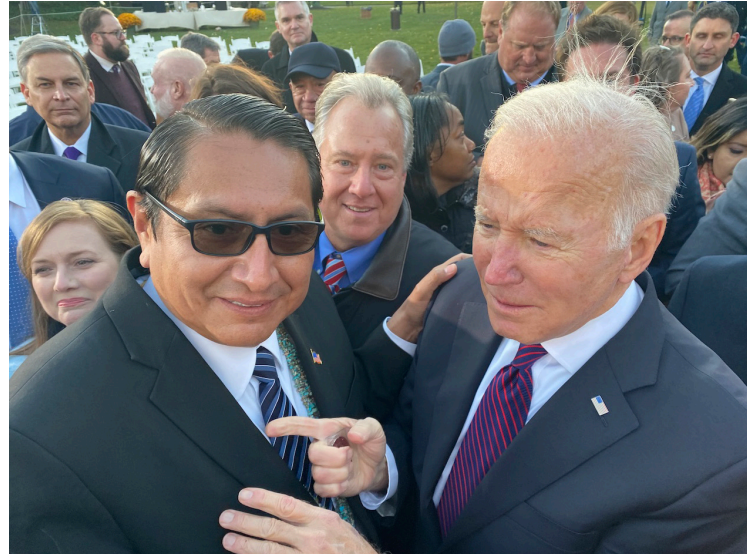
PRESIDENT NEZ JOINS PRESIDENT BIDEN FOR THE SIGNING OF THE \$1.2 TRILLION INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez joined United States President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, key cabinet members, and Congressional members at the South Lawn of the White House on Monday, for the signing of the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

“It was truly an honor to be invited to the White House to represent the Navajo people for this monumental signing of the Infrastructure Bill, which will invest more than \$11 billion in Indian Country for transportation, broadband, energy, water and sanitation facilities, and climate resiliency. This measure will also fully fund the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act to provide much-needed water resources for Navajo people.” said President Nez. “We thank President Biden, Vice President Harris, Speaker Pelosi, Congressional leaders, and our entire Congressional delegation for coming together to pass another historic measure that invests in native communities. We also acknowledge and thank the 24th Navajo Nation Council for their support and advocacy for the bill.”

Major highlights include:

- Provides the Reclamation Water Settlement Fund with \$2.5 billion to fully fund existing Indian Water Rights Settlements.
- Authorizes over \$3 billion for the Tribal Transportation Program over five years with an additional \$925 million for the Tribal Transportation Facility Bridges program (23 U.S.C. § 202(d)) over five years as supplemental appropriations.
- Authorizes \$2 billion for the NTIA Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program and extends the deadlines for use of funds, removes the restriction that funds can only be used during the COVID-19 pandemic, and allows for new and subsequent funding rounds for additional appropriations.
- Provides \$3.5 billion over five years for improvements and construction of IHS sanitation facilities under Indian Health Service Sanitation Facilities Construction Program.
- Provides \$11.2 billion for grants to States and Tribes for abandoned coal mine land and water reclamation projects. Tribes with programs approved under Section 405 of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 are eligible to receive grants.
- Provides \$55.426 billion for State and Tribal Assistance Grants for purposes of providing clean and safe drinking water to communities.
- Provides \$6 billion for the Battery Material Processing Grant and Battery Manufacturing and Recycling Grant programs that will distribute grants with extra consideration given to eligible entities that partner with Indian tribes.



“Infrastructure is the primary building block of our communities. This investment will not only help rebuild roads and bridges our people need to access basic services, but it will lay the foundation for many communities who will see broadband or water delivery for the very first time,” said Vice President Myron Lizer. “We thank Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration for working together on this initiative.”

President Nez and Vice President Lizer said the infrastructure funds will help to build on the success of the CARES Act funds, which allowed over 700 Navajo families to receive electricity, over 300 off-grid solar installations, 117 water and waste water upgrades and replacements, 105 water cistern system installations, 30 waterline connections to homes, 139 broadband installations and upgrades, and four new broadband/cell phone towers, and hardship assistance for Navajo people. Legislations are also being developed to provide another round of hardship assistance and infrastructure development/improvements using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 3684, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act on Nov. 5 by a vote of 228-206. The Senate voted 69-30 to pass the infrastructure back in August.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT LEGISLATION PROPOSES OVER \$1.16 BILLION FOR HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer recently met with Division Directors, to review Legislation No. 0257-21, which seeks the 24th Navajo Nation Council's support to allocate over \$1.16 billion in Fiscal Recovery Funds authorized through the American Rescue Plan Act for hardship assistance, water/electricity/broadband infrastructure, housing, and bathroom additions. This will be the first of several legislations that will be considered to allocate over \$2 billion that the Navajo Nation received to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Legislation No. 0257-21 proposes the following funding allocations:

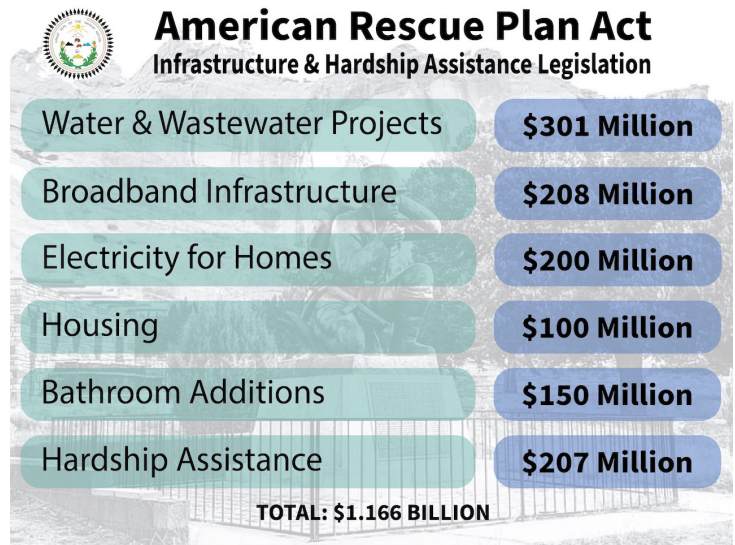
§ Water and Wastewater Projects	\$301 million
§ Broadband Infrastructure	\$208 million
§ Electricity for Homes	\$200 million
§ Housing	\$100 million
§ Bathroom Additions	\$150 million
§ Hardship Assistance	\$207 million

President Nez and Division Directors previously met with the 24th Navajo Nation Council, Speaker Seth Damon, and Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne, to strategize for the implementation of the Navajo Nation's Fiscal Recovery Funds. The Office of the President and Vice President worked closely with the Legislative Branch to develop the legislation to help provide immediate and long-term relief for the Navajo people.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform the Navajo Nation and to improve the quality of life for elders, disabled, veterans, youth, and families. Never before has the Navajo Nation received this level of funding in such a short timeframe. If passed by the Council, this legislation will provide immediate financial relief for children and adults. We've been informed that based on a review conducted by the Department of Justice, individuals who previously received Hardship Assistance will not have to re-apply for the next round of hardship funds. We appreciate all of the hard work that is being done day after day behind the scenes by many. This is not an easy process, but together, we continue to work together and work through the challenges to implement plans for hardship assistance, water, electricity, broadband, housing, and bathroom additions," said President Nez.

In July, the 24th Navajo Nation Council approved Resolution CJY-41-21, which was signed into law by President Nez and provides the framework for the implementation of the \$2 billion in funds and allowed the Executive Branch to establish the Navajo Nation Fiscal Recovery Fund Office led by interim Executive Director Tom Platero.

"The implementation of the Fiscal Recovery Funds will be life-changing for many of our elders, youth, and many others, but it will take collaboration and support from all leaders to be successful. Jobs will be created and the influx of funds will help to provide a boost to our local economy. Last year, the Navajo Nation used approximately half of the \$714 million in CARES Act funds for hardship assistance



that went directly to our Navajo people, over 700 families received electricity in their homes for the very first time, and many more received water resources, improved broadband service, and much more. We have so many needs in our communities across the Navajo Nation and we are taking a huge step forward for our people and to help us emerge from this pandemic," stated Vice President Lizer.

The Nez-Lizer Administration continues to work with the Legislative Branch to develop more legislations to allocate funds for educational initiatives, wellness centers/detox centers/senior centers/transition housing, mental health services, social services, chapter projects, economic development, tourism, and enterprises.

Legislation No. 0257-21 is currently in the public comment period. The bill can be found on the Office of Legislative Services website: <http://dibb.nnols.org/publicreporting.aspx>.

AVOID LARGE GATHERINGS

There has been an increase of COVID-19 cases because of large gatherings. The Navajo Nation advises everyone to avoid large gatherings and off-reservation travel. **Effective August 16, 2021.**

Avoid Large Gatherings

- The safest place is at home
- Only gather with people you live with
- Gatherings of 15 or fewer people is required on the Navajo Nation

Gatherings can include:

- Celebrations (birthdays, milestones, anniversaries)
- Traditional ceremonies
- Religious church and other houses of worship
- Outdoor recreational events
- Youth programs

DIKOS NTSAAIGII-19 COVID-19

NAVAJO HEALTH COMMAND OPERATIONS CENTER
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www.ndah.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19

[@navajodephealth](#) #Dinebaadil

PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY NEZ ADDRESS FEDERAL POLICIES DURING THE WHITE HOUSE TRIBAL NATIONS SUMMIT

On November 16, during the final day of the White House Tribal Nations Summit, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez spoke about the COVID-19 pandemic on the Navajo Nation and the opportunities to change federal policies to help advance infrastructure improvements for water, electricity, broadband, roads, housing, and a new Executive Order to support missing persons initiatives.

“In 2019, a modern-day monster known as COVID-19 entered our communities —impacting the lives of many of our elders, our children, frontline warriors, and many others throughout the world. The onset of COVID-19 forced us to close our schools, government offices, and it magnified the lack of basic infrastructure on the Navajo Nation and all tribal communities. Some of you may have seen photos of our Navajo children with their grandparents on hills and mountains with their laptops in order to gain access to the internet so they could participate in virtual learning. Unfortunately, these situations were all too common across,” said President Nez.

Last year, the Navajo Nation received \$714 million in CARES Act funds, which allowed over 700 Navajo families to receive electricity, over 300 off-grid solar installations, 117 water and waste water upgrades and replacements, 105 water cistern system installations, 30 waterline connections to homes, 139 broadband installations and upgrades, and four new broadband/cell phone towers. Approximately half of the \$714 million was distributed to the Navajo people in the form of hardship assistance. President Nez pointed out that more long-term improvements could have been completed using CARES Act funds, if not for the initial deadline of December 2020 and the federal requirements and clearances needed to advance more projects.

The Navajo Nation is expected to receive additional funds from the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Bill that was signed into law on Monday, by President Biden. President Nez joined President Biden, Vice President Harris, their cabinet members, and Congressional members for the signing of the Infrastructure Bill at the White House where he also spoke with U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and other high level officials regarding infrastructure development.

“While funding is made possible, we need to address the burdensome red tape that exists. Federal laws and regulations continue to stall projects. For example, to construct a BIA highway or bridge, the Navajo Nation has to secure environmental compliances from both the BIA and Federal Highway Administration. Why should Tribes have to secure two environmental compliances from two different agencies? Federal Agencies need to work with one another to create processes that require one approval. We urge this Administration to cut the red tape by streamlining federal processes through secretarial orders or by amending federal regulations to lessen the administrative burden placed on tribes. Failure to clear out some of the burdens that prevent infrastructure investment will mean all our efforts to help pass the Infrastructure Bill may not lead to the progress we want for our people,” added President Nez.



With the American Rescue Plan Act funds, the Nez-Lizer Administration presented a plan that would provide at least \$780 million for water, powerlines, broadband, housing, and bathroom additions, \$350 million for direct services in communities related to education, health care, mental health, social services, detox centers, senior centers, economic development, and tourism. \$220 million would be allocated for chapter projects and \$100 million for enterprises. Approximately \$207 million has already been approved for another round of hardship assistance for enrolled members of the Navajo Nation.

During the summit, First Lady Nez also had the opportunity to thank President Biden, First Lady Dr. Jill Biden, and Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland for supporting an Executive Order issued on Monday, directing federal officials to work hand in hand with Tribal Nations and Tribal partners to build safe and healthy Tribal communities and to support comprehensive law enforcement, prevention, intervention, and support services to help address missing and murdered Indigenous people.

“On behalf of the Navajo Nation Office of the First Lady and Second Lady, we are committed to restoring unity, healing, and the well-being of our Navajo children, women, elders, and families. As mothers and leaders, we continue to raise awareness to focus areas that impact our Navajo families, including childhood development and education, culture preservation, health and wellness, parenting, reducing trauma of children and women, behavioral and mental health issues, violence against women and children, and many others. With increased awareness, resources, and network building, we are confident that many issues will be addressed with the Biden-Harris Administration, and look forward to working together,” said First Lady Nez.

“We thank President Biden and Vice President Harris for restoring the tribal nations summit and providing a seat at the table for our people. Our voices are being heard and we will continue to work with federal officials to Build Back Better and ensure that funding benefits our people in the short-term and long-term as we move forward together,” stated President Nez.

NAVAJO NATION LEADERS CONTINUE TO WORK WITH CONGRESS TO COMPLETE THE NAVAJO GALLUP WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

On Tuesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer joined New Mexico Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández (D-N.M.), City of Gallup Mayor Louie Bonaguidi, and officials with the U.S. Department of the Interior and Bureau of Reclamation for a site visit for the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project that is currently under construction and delivering much-needed water resources for Navajo families in the state of New Mexico.

“Water is life and the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project is essential to delivering clean water to thousands of our Navajo people. This project is bringing water infrastructure to more and more homes as construction continues. We thank our congressional delegation, including Congresswoman Leger Fernández for championing this effort and continuing to support more funding for water needs in our communities. Together, we are making progress for our people through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which will also fund the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement,” said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez.

Congresswoman Leger Fernández advocated for investments in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for water infrastructure, including the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project. On Nov. 15, President Nez and Congresswoman Leger Fernández joined President Joe Biden at the White House for the signing of the infrastructure bill, which also included \$2.5 billion to fully fund existing Indian Water Rights Settlements.

“New Mexicans have always recognized the fragility of our water resource. We must protect it from threats like climate change and drought. We know that without it we cannot have safe schools, thriving businesses, successful farmers and ranchers, and a vibrant community. That’s why I’m proud to have helped secure funding in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for the Indian Water Rights Settlement Fund that funds the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project,” said Leger Fernández. “This funding will get us one step closer toward completing this project. I’m committed to continuing to work with all of the partners of the project to ensure that it receives the financial support it needs to cross the finish line.”

Congresswoman Leger Fernández also played an instrumental role in securing \$67 million in funding for the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project in this year’s House passed appropriations bill, which is also supported by President Nez and Vice President Lizer.

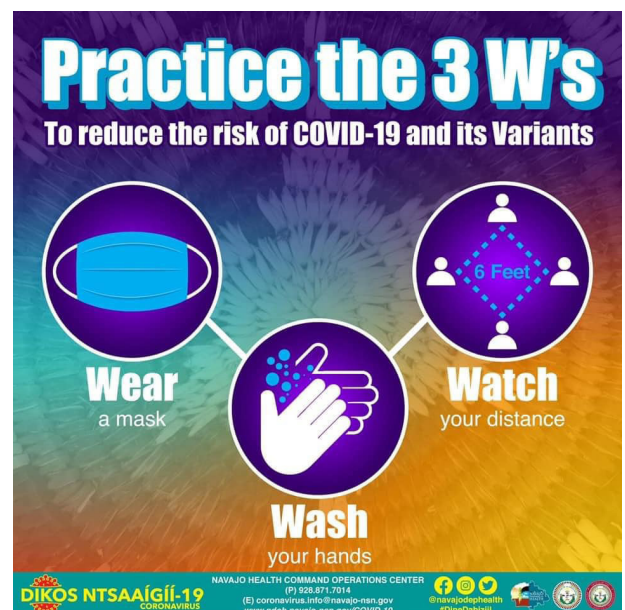
“We are very thankful to Congresswoman Leger Fernández, Gallup Mayor Bonaguidi, and our federal partners for meeting with us on a consistent basis to ensure that the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project is completed successfully. We look forward to the next phase of the project that will deliver even more water to our Navajo communities west of the current construction sites. Water infrastructure is essential to elevating the quality of life and creating more economic opportunities for our Navajo people,” said Vice



President Lizer.

New Mexico State Rep. D. Wonda Johnson (D-Dist. 5) was also in attendance to offer her support for the project. She stated, “It is amazing to see the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project making progress. 40 years of work in the making by many people from many different entities is finally coming to fruition. This reliable supply of water is so important to our communities in Gallup and our surrounding Navajo communities. Water is one of five most precious elements of nature, so precious we cannot survive more than a few days without it. Our constituents are grateful for this good news.”

President Nez previously visited the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project’s Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant, located in Dził Na Oodilii, N.M., which will facilitate the delivery of clean water to rural Navajo communities and the Jicarilla Apache Nation. The Cutter Lateral is one of two major water pipelines being developed as a result of the San Juan River Water Rights Settlement between the Navajo Nation and the state of New Mexico.



NAVAJO NATION APPLAUDS PRESIDENT BIDEN'S EXECUTIVE ORDER TO ADVANCE EFFORTS TO ADDRESS MISSING NATIVE PERSONS CASES

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez commended U.S. President Joe Biden for issuing a new Executive Order during the opening day of the White House Tribal Nations Summit on Monday, directing federal officials to work hand in hand with Tribal Nations and Tribal partners to build safe and healthy Tribal communities and to support comprehensive law enforcement, prevention, intervention, and support services to help address missing and murdered Indigenous people.

"With today's Executive Order, President Biden continues to fulfill his commitment to tribal nations that will help to strengthen coordination between all agencies to help locate and resolve missing persons cases in tribal communities. Far too many of our Navajo people continue to endure the heartache and frustration of a missing loved one. We have to continue to work together to do more for our people. We thank President Biden, Secretary Haaland, and all grassroots and community advocates," said President Nez.

First Lady Nez commended the signing of the Executive Order and said more needs to be done to address missing persons including the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, to help resolve jurisdictional issues that arise in cases involving violence against Navajo women by non-Navajo perpetrators.

"We appreciate President Biden and First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden's, support for all missing and murdered Indigenous relatives across the country. The Executive Order will help agencies at the federal, state, and tribal levels to better communicate and work together to address data sharing and collecting, responses by law enforcement, and support for families of missing persons," said First Lady Nez.


The order states, "Generations of Native Americans have experienced violence or mourned a missing or murdered family member or loved one, and the lasting impacts of such tragedies are felt throughout the country. Native Americans face unacceptably high levels of violence, and are victims of violent crime at a rate much higher than the national average. Native American women, in particular, are disproportionately the victims of sexual and gender-based violence, including intimate partner homicide."

"Today, I'm directing federal officials to work with tribal nations on a strategy to improve public safety and advanced justice," Biden said at the White House's first-ever Tribal Leaders Summit. "This builds on the work we did together on reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act in 2013, when we granted authority to tribes to exercise jurisdiction over non-Indian offenders who commit violence on tribal lands. We're going to reauthorize that again, we're going to expand the jurisdiction to include other offenses like sex trafficking, sexual assault and child abuse."

On Tuesday, President Nez will participate in a panel discussion



regarding tribal priorities on the second day of the Tribal Nations Summit. For more information regarding the Executive Order, please visit the White House website: <https://www.whitehouse.gov>.



Having a Joyful and Safe Holiday

When getting ready to celebrate, it's important to consider the risk of holiday gatherings. The more people you come in contact with, and the longer you're in contact with them, the higher the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. The safest ways to celebrate this holiday is at home with the people you live with.

Community transmission- Be aware of how much community spread is in the area where you plan to celebrate, and consider the risk of hosting or attending a holiday gathering.

Tips for Gathering Safely:


- Setting**
Host gathering outdoors if weather permits. Indoor gatherings with poor ventilation increase the chance of spread. If held inside, increase airflow open windows or doors.
- Safety**
Practice safety measures:
 - Stay at least 6 feet apart
 - Wear a mask
 - Wash hands oftenThese behaviors will reduce the risk of getting or spreading COVID-19.
- Duration**
Gatherings that last longer pose a greater risk of exposure than shorter gatherings.
- Duration**
I would edit the phrasing to "There is less risk of getting or spreading COVID-19 where preventive measures are practiced, such as masking and social distancing."
- Number of People**
I would edit the graphic to include a representation of 15 people, instead of "6ft social distancing" to match the phrasing. Maybe the graphic could be a person "x 15 max".

Get tested before gathering or before returning home.

DIKOS NTSAAígíí-19
CORONAVIRUS

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www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19

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[#DineDabiziti](https://www.tiktok.com/@navajodephealth)



PRESIDENT NEZ AND VICE PRESIDENT LIZER SPEAK IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL ROAD IMPROVEMENTS AT THE 2021 ROAD SUMMIT

On Tuesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer participated in the 2021 Road Summit, which focused on the Navajo Nation right-of-way process for road improvements at Navajo Fire Rock Casino in Church Rock, N.M. The summit was hosted by 24th Navajo Nation Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie for local chapter governments located within McKinley County.

A right-of-way is a right or privilege granted by the Resources and Development Committee of the Navajo Nation Council to access a defined area of trust lands for a prescribed purpose and time. A right-of-way can be issued for roads, pipelines, telecommunications, or electrical.

“On behalf of the Nez-Lizer Administration, we appreciate Delegate Yazzie for hosting the road summit for Church Rock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, and Thoreau Chapters. It is important for local leaders, community members, and stakeholders to learn the rights-of-way process and establish partnerships for road improvements. With the American Rescue Plan Act, we are looking to allocate more funding for road projects. It is great to see today that many of our local governments are getting prepared for more infrastructure projects in the future,” said President Nez, who joined the summit virtually.

During his address, President Nez also noted that the Navajo Nation consists of 14,700 miles of roads, including 5,000 or tribal routes, 6,200 miles of Bureau of Indian Affairs roads, and 180 bridges. Currently, the Nation receives over \$62 million per year for road improvements, \$55 million from the Tribal Transportation Program, and seven million from the Nation’s Fuel Excise Tax.

Additionally, the BIA receives eight million for road maintenance. Collectively, \$70 million is not enough to cover our Nation’s transportation infrastructure needs. Realistically, the Navajo Nation needs approximately \$2.5 billion to provide minimal coverage on the Nation’s priority roads and bridges, President added.

“Roads are the primary building block of our communities, and with many funding opportunities coming from the federal, state, and tribal government, our communities have to be ready for infrastructure projects. Many of our chapters need assistance understanding the right-of-way process and establishing partnerships to accomplish the lengthy road improvement process. We have to support our local chapters to get as many road improvements considered and funded, so our students, elders, and individuals with disabilities can have access to resources and services,” said Delegate Yazzie.

Vice President Lizer was also in attendance and spoke about the need to improve the lengthy right-of-way and the Navajo Environmental Protection Agency’s Environmental Compliance process to complete road projects in a timely manner.

“The current right-of-way and environmental compliance processes are very lengthy. Occasionally, new construction of a road project



takes months to years to process through our existing system. Lengthy processes result in spending a high amount of funds for right-of-way and compliances. Ideally, these funds should be spent on actual construction purposes. Today, we highlight the importance of collaboration and communication to limit these challenges. We must assist one another to identify areas of improvement and begin working on solutions,” said Vice President Lizer.

The summit also included presentations from Navajo Division of Transportation Executive Director Garrett Silversmith, McKinley County Right-of-Way Coordinator Julie Alonzo, Bureau of Indian Affairs officials, New Mexico Department of Transportation Traffic Engineer Jason Grover, and Navajo Land Department Director Mike Halona. The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President thanks the local chapters and partners who supported the 2021 Roads Summit.

NAVAJO LEADERS ATTEND THE 2021 NAVAJO NATION ANNUAL INVESTMENT MEETING

On Monday, Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer attended the annual Navajo Nation Investment Committee meeting with members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council's Budget and Finance Committee, including Chair Jamie Henio, Council Delegates Nathaniel Brown, Amber Kanazbah Crotty, and Jimmy Yellowhair at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort in Leupp, Ariz. Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne and Acting Controller Elizabeth Begay were also in attendance.

The Navajo Nation Investment Committee is an advisory group to the Budget and Finance Committee in regard to the management of the Nation's investment strategies and is responsible for recommending managers and custodians to oversee investments.

"The Nation's investments play a critical role in our economy and have an enormous impact on all communities and families on the Navajo Nation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our economy persevered, and we continued the mission to build the Nation's investment portfolio. Our past leaders envisioned a strong financial state for our people, and we must continue to focus on making progress to ensure our investments are successful in the future. We appreciate the conscientious work, recommendations, and updates provided by the firms," said Vice President Lizer.

During the meeting, RVK, who serves as the Nation's investment consultant, provided reports on the Navajo Nation's asset allocation, investments review, ongoing manager monitoring and due diligence, identification of strategic enhancements, and other financial opportunities. The meeting also included presentations from several investment managers regarding the 2021 Fiscal Year investment



portfolio performances and their responsibilities to the Navajo Nation.

"On behalf of the Nez-Lizer Administration, we stay committed to diversifying the Nation's investment portfolio to increase the Nation's overall revenue and rate of return. As leaders, we have to monitor, study, and consider investments that will provide for our children and future generations, added Vice President Lizer.

The Investment Committee will continue meeting this week to receive more updates and reports. More information will be provided regarding the Navajo Nation's financial portfolios and investments.

NAVAJO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY BREAKS GROUND ON NEW ACADEMIC BUILDING

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez joined Navajo Technical University Board of Regents members Tom Platero, Dr. Delores Greeyes, and Roselyn John, NTU President Dr. Elmer Guy, and students on Monday, as the university held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new Academic Building that will be home to new classrooms and office spaces at the NTU campus in Crownpoint, N.M. 24th Navajo Nation Council's Health, Education, and Human Services Committee members were also in attendance including chair Daniel Tso and Council Delegates Paul Begay and Edison Wauneka.

The new 27,000 square-foot facility will house 13 classrooms, two vocational classrooms for computer-based programs, and 14 faculty offices. The academic center, funded through the New Mexico Higher Education Department and Navajo Technical University, will also include state of the art tech spaces for students, WiFi access, and

charging stations for laptops.

"This is a big step forward for Navajo Technical University and the Crownpoint community. We are very proud of the collaborative work that is being done to build NTU's capacity to educate and empower more Diné students. The new academic facility will serve to further develop and advance the minds of our young people and help to build our Nation. We have many bright and intelligent Navajo people, who simply need a hand up when it comes to getting the resources they need to pursue and complete their educational goals. We congratulate NTU President Dr. Guy, the Board of Regents, all of the staff members, and students for their hard work and success," said President Nez.

The project will continue to fulfill Navajo Technical University's vision statement that includes providing "an excellent educational

experience in a supportive, culturally diverse environment, enabling all community members to grow intellectually, culturally, and economically.”

“Navajo Technical University has made enormous strides to serve Navajo communities and to provide higher educational opportunities close to home for our students. The growth and expansion of NTU on all levels is inspiring for our Nation and our youth. We commend NTU for their great work and commitment to uplifting our youth and building a brighter future for our people,” said Vice President Myron Lizer.

NTU President Dr. Guy stated, “We are very excited to begin construction of the new academic building at our main campus.

The building will serve as the center of teaching and learning for our NTU students and faculty and will foster advancements that are critical to NTU program development. The new academic building will be LEED-certified demonstrating our commitment to do our part to protect the environment. We look forward to continued growth and support for our university.”

Construction of the new Academic Building is expected to be completed by December 2023. The Nez-Lizer Administration thanks Navajo Technical University’s Board of Regents, President Dr. Elmer Guy, and all of the staff members, students, and supporters.

NAVAJO NATION HONORS AND RECOGNIZES DINÉ WARRIORS ON VETERANS DAY

On November 11, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez were joined by Tuba City Agency Commander Billy Goodman, Jr., U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ), Office of U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Lujan’s field representative Brian Lee, Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne, 24th Navajo Nation Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. and Jimmy Yellowhair, Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Director James Zwierlein, and Miss Navajo Nation Niagara Rockbridge to commemorate Veterans Day during a live-streamed event at the Navajo Nation Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock, Ariz., the capital of the Navajo Nation.

During his address, President Nez delivered a message of appreciation to all Navajo veterans, their families, and their communities. He also acknowledged Gold Star Mothers and Families who have lost their loved ones during military service.

“It is my honor to recognize the thousands of Navajo veterans who have served our country in every branch of the Armed Services. Upon their service to the country, many returned home to provide for their families, and many became community leaders and professionals who continue to contribute to our society. Many of our warriors also helped respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we appreciate their bravery and courage for always lending a helping hand. Today, we also have to remember, pray, and support veterans and their families who carry their service’s mental, emotional, and physical scars. We also honor and show appreciation for all Diné warriors who are currently serving in the Armed Forces to ensure our country remains strong, resilient, and united,” said President Nez.

President Nez added, “Today, we also pray for those who have passed on and pray for all of the Gold Star Mothers and Families. Most importantly, we cannot celebrate this special day without acknowledging our Navajo Code Talkers, who used our sacred language, the words of our ancestors, to help win World War II. We pray for them and all of their loved ones. Today is a time to be proud

of who we are as Diné people, to pay tribute to all of the men and women who serve our country, and to honor and remember those who gave their lives for our freedom and our country.”

U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly stated that he wanted to be on the Navajo Nation on Veterans Day because he understands the long and proud history of military service that the Navajo people have provided for so many years. He also spoke about the need for the federal government to provide more support and services for all veterans.

“We commemorate the service, sacrifice, and contributions of our Navajo veterans who defended and preserved our life, liberty, and freedom. We are forever thankful for the many Diné warriors who have bravely fought worldwide to protect our homeland. Every Navajo Veteran is a hero to the American people. We take pride in our Navajo Code Talkers, who have been nationally recognized for their unbreakable code that assisted in the country’s win during World War II. We love our Navajo veterans. Today, we pledge to support those who have fought for us. They deserve our prayers, support, and gratitude,” said Vice President Lizer.

Tuba City Agency Commander Billy Goodman, Jr., who serves on the Navajo Nation Veterans Advisory Council, also spoke and recognized his fellow veterans for their service and spoke about the need to work together to continue improving services and benefits for Navajo veterans.

Navajo comedian and motivational speaker Pax Harvey served as the Master of Ceremony for the event. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Deputy Director Hubert Smith. The Office of the President and Vice President thanks all veterans for their service and everyone who coordinated and assisted with the veterans event. To watch the virtual event, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQP4qliKuA>.

NIŁCH' ÉÍ BEE ÍÍNÁ – AIR IS LIFE ACT SIGNED INTO LAW TO PROMOTE A HEALTHIER AND COMMERCIAL SMOKE-FREE NAVAJO NATION

On November 6, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer were joined by members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council and the Air is Life Coalition, as they signed into the law the “Niłch’ Éí Bee Ííná – Air is Life Act of 2021” through Resolution CO-58- 21, which prohibits using commercial tobacco products in enclosed and indoor areas on the Navajo Nation.

The Act states that commercial tobacco products include conventional cigarettes and pipes, cigars, e-cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco products. The new law does not restrict commercial tobacco use in private residences unless operated for childcare, adult daycare, healthcare facilities, or home offices. Most importantly, the Act does not prohibit using commercial tobacco or traditional smoke for ceremonial or cultural settings and purposes within the Navajo Nation.

“We commend the diligent work of the Air is Life Coalition for paving the way for us to be here today,” said Chairman Daniel Tso (Littlewater, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake, Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Ojo Encino, Counselor). “The perseverance of Dr. Patricia Nez-Henderson and her team deserves recognition. It is an honor to have been asked to sponsor this historic legislation. The Navajo Nation Council has spoken loudly that the health of the Navajo people is valuable and not to be gambled with.”

The Air is Life Coalition has been working collaboratively for over 13 years to educate the public on the dangers and risks of secondhand smoke and assisted the Navajo Nation to establish this comprehensive smoke-free bill.

“The Air is Life Act is a monumental achievement and bold step in the right direction to promote healthy living among our Navajo people. Secondhand smoke can cause health issues among nonsmokers, such as children and elders. Public health professionals have concluded that the only way to protect nonsmokers and vulnerable populations from secondhand smoke is to require smoke-free workplaces and public places. It is a fundamental right to protect our Navajo people’s right to breathe clean air,” said President Jonathan Nez, who also thanked the 24th Navajo Nation Council for their support of the legislation.

Heath, Education, and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) Chairman Daniel Tso is the bill sponsor, with Speaker Seth Damon, Delegate Carl Slater, and Delegate Nathaniel Brown as cosponsors. In October, the Act was unanimously passed by 20 votes in favor.

“The health of our people is important to our future as the largest Sovereign Nation in the country,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaali, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). “Our health studies show through the data that you live

a shorter life with every cigarette you light or secondhand smoke you inhale. This resolution ensures we end it in our public places and tribal office buildings for the safety of all. The Navajo Nation Council commends Chairman Daniel Tso for his leadership as a sponsor of this bill and we commend President Jonathan Nez for working alongside us to make history today.”

The signed resolution enacts the Air is Life Act in Title 13 of the Navajo Nation Code. The Navajo Department of Health and the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety will enforce the provisions and issue violations for any penalties.

“Continued efforts to promote the implementation of comprehensive smoke-free laws are critical to protect nonsmokers from preventable health problems in workplaces, public places, and events. The health effects from commercial products include stroke, lung cancer, heart disease, asthma, and others. Smoke-free laws have been shown to improve indoor air quality, reduce secondhand smoke exposure, change social norms regarding the acceptability of smoking, prevent youth and young adult smoking addiction, and reduce heart attack and asthma hospitalizations among nonsmokers. As leaders, we have to ensure the well-being and health of our Navajo citizens,” said Vice President Myron Lizer.

The Act now prohibits using commercial tobacco products in enclosed, indoor workplaces or public places, and within 25 feet of any indoor area across the Navajo Nation.

“Our health coalition has been working tirelessly for the last 13 years with our Navajo communities and leadership for this day to come. I am grateful to the Honorable President Nez, Council Delegate Daniel Tso, the 24th Navajo Nation Council, and our Chapter leaders for putting the health of our people first. This historic law will have a positive impact on the health of the Navajo people and future generations to come. Niłch’ éí Bee Ííná – Air is Life is not only the essence of historic health policy, but it is the foundation of our Navajo teachings. It is these teachings that created the path for this moment,” said Dr. Patricia Nez-Henderson.

“Niłch’ éí Bee Ííná represents the oxygen we breathe to live and exist every day,” said Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Dennehotso, Kayenta, Chíłchinbii’tó). “We need to protect our people at all costs and this includes our hard working staff employed by the casinos. We all know the health risks from commercial tobacco, including deadly cancers. Life is sacred and this resolution sends that message across Indian Country today.”

PRESIDENT NEZ OFFERS SUPPORT FOR CONCERNS BROUGHT FORTH BY THE NAVAJO NATION ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer extend their appreciation to the Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disability for bringing their concerns forth to leaders of the Navajo Nation, during a press conference held in Window Rock, Ariz. on Wednesday.

Navajo Nation Executive Branch Chief of Staff Paulson Chaco, Division of Human Resources Executive Director Dr. Perphelia Fowler, and Fiscal Recovery Fund Office Interim Director Tom Platero were present, while President Nez attended the funeral service for World War II veteran Bennie S. Cowboy, to offer their support and information regarding the Navajo Nation's ongoing work to address needs for the disabled community.

"I appreciate the leadership of Hoskie Benally Jr., President of the Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disability, for bringing the concerns to the members of the Navajo Nation Council and the Executive Branch. As leaders, it is our responsibility to work together to address these issues. Last week, Vice President Lizer and I signed a resolution into law approving \$260,000 for new vehicles to provide transportation services for Navajo people with developmental disabilities. That's one example of working together to support our people," said President Nez.

In September, the Navajo Nation Council approved numerous Conditions of Appropriations in the FY2022 Comprehensive Budget, directing the Executive Branch to address several issues including access to public buildings for disabled individuals — a critical need that the Executive Branch continues to work on dating back many years. The Condition of Appropriation was line-item vetoed because the directive was not supported with additional funding and because the Division of General Services is already working to increase access to facilities.

Within the FY2022 Comprehensive Budget, President Nez approved carryover funding to conduct a comprehensive facilities and buildings assessment and evaluation, which will help to improve

ADA requirements for public facilities as well.

The Division of General Services has prioritized over 160 ADA immediate projects to be addressed at numerous tribal offices throughout the Navajo Nation, which includes ADA restroom renovations, entrance additions, doors, stairs and ramps replacements, sign upgrades, drinking fountain accommodations, seating upgrades, and parking, sidewalk installations, and parking improvements. Approximately 50 ADA projects, totaling \$350,000, on the priority listing have been completed.

"Access to public facilities, housing, health care needs, and other services are in need of improvement here on the Navajo Nation and across the country. The American Rescue Plan Act funds provide us with that opportunity to address some of those needs and create long-term solutions for all of our Navajo people, including those who are disabled. We've put forth a plan that would provide funds for hardship assistance, infrastructure development, mental health services, and many critical needs and services. All of this will require the support of our Council members and we look forward to those discussions as the legislations are introduced for American Rescue Plan Act funding," added President Nez.

President Nez said he is open to exploring funding options to increase available funds to continue those efforts. The Office of the President and Vice President thanks the Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disability and looks forward to continuing working together.

The Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disability serves as an advocate for individuals with disabilities and their families. The NNACOD is composed of individuals with disabilities, representatives of the public and private service providers, and other groups concerned with disability-related issues. The council advocates for equal access to employment, education, housing, public safety, communication, recreation, health, and social opportunities.

PRESIDENT NEZ APPROVES THE TRANSFER OF THE NAVAJO TRANSIT SYSTEM TO THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION

On November 4, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer signed Resolution CO-59-21 into law, approving the transfer of the Navajo Transit System from the Navajo Nation Division of General Services to the Navajo Division of Transportation (NDOT) to improve the overall efficiency of the Navajo public transportation system, which provides services to thousands of Navajo people on a daily basis.

The Navajo Transit System currently provides safe and reliable public transportation within 41 chapters for Navajo citizens and improves the quality of life by increasing access to health care, education, employment, recreation, entertainment, and essential shopping and services.

“Transferring the transit program to the Navajo Division of Transportation will strengthen the program’s effectiveness, service delivery, and funding opportunities. Public transportation and fixed-route transit services continue to be much more efficient and beneficial in getting Navajo people from one place to another. Other benefits include reducing air pollution, increasing fuel efficiency, reducing traffic, saving money, encouraging healthier habits, and ensuring that elders and disabled people have this transportation option. It has been our administration’s priority to re-evaluate programs to make them more efficient for our Navajo citizens,” said President Nez, who also thanked the 24th Navajo Nation Council for their support of the legislation and Council Delegate Carl Slater for sponsoring the bill.

Navajo Division of Transportation Executive Director Garrett Silversmith stated that his staff members are confident that they will build on the success of the program and increase the Nation’s public transportation systems. Public transportation plays an essential role for people who are unable to drive, including students, individuals with disabilities, and elders.

“The transition will not affect the service delivery of the current routes operating across the Navajo Nation. With the expertise and guidance of NDOT professionals, the transit system will only get better. Transportation and mobility are key factors in the struggle for equal opportunity, and reliable transportation can increase access to education, employment, healthcare, housing, and community involvement for our Navajo people,” said Vice President Lizer.

Council Delegates Carl Slater, Raymond Smith, Jr., and Kee Allen Begay, Jr. were also in attendance for the signing of the resolution and offered their support for the transit program.

The Nez-Lizer Administration thanks the 24th Navajo Nation Council, Navajo Division of Transportation and Division of General Services, and many others who supported the successful efforts. The legislation was approved by the Council by a vote of 22-0 on Oct. 20. For more information on the Navajo Transit System or current routes, please visit their website at: <https://www.navajotransit.com/about-us.html>.

COVID-19 RELIEF RESOURCES

Federal Communications Commission’s Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

Administrator: Federal Communications Commission

Apply Online or Download Application:

<https://getemergencybroadband.org>

Deadline: Open

For more information contact:

- <https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>
- 833-511-0311

Description: The program provides a temporary discount on monthly broadband bills for qualifying low-income households. Applicants may receive up to \$75 a month if the household is on tribal lands, and a one-time discount of up to \$100 on a computer or tablet. The program is open to the following: Households that participate in an existing low-income or pandemic relief program offered by a broadband provider, Lifeline subscribers, including those that are on Medicaid or accept SNAP benefits, Households with kids receiving free and reduced-price lunch or school breakfast, Pell grant recipients, and Those who have lost jobs and seen their income reduced in the last year.

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Administrator: Navajo Housing Authority

Download Application:

navajohousingauthority.org/erap/ or email: ERAP@hooghan.org,

Pickup Location: 15 Housing Management Offices & Window Rock Administration Office

For more information contact:

- 928.871.2680/2668

- Email: ERAP@hooghan.org

Deadline: September 30, 2022

Description: The program provides emergency financial assistance for the payment of rent or utilities, and other expenses/costs related to housing for families affected from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Up to three months of assistance. Eligibility: Qualified for unemployment benefits, reduction in household income, incurred significant income, experienced financial hardship, at-risk of homelessness, and household income below 80% of area median income.

FEMA COVID-19 Burial Assistance Program

Administrator: Federal Emergency Management Agency

To Apply Call: 884.684.6333 / TTY: 800.462.7585,

Monday - Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (MDT)

Deadline: Open

For more information: <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance/faq>

Description: Application opened in April to the general public to provide financial assistance for COVID-19 related funeral expenses incurred after Jan. 20, 2020. Eligibility requires: The death must have occurred in the U.S., the death certificate must indicate the death was attributed to COVID-19, the applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien who incurred funeral expenses after January 20, 2020, and there is no requirement for the deceased person to have been a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien. Required documentation: official death certificate, funeral expenses document, and proof of funds received from other sources.